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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 'Need To Know'

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*Editor:* Those of us who have approved access to classified information of various levels are fully briefed at a minimum once each year as to our responsibilities for safeguarding this information. We are also told what the criminal and civil penalties are for the unlawful disclosure of classified information.

Disclosure in these cases does not necessarily mean to a foreign government or agent with the intent to do harm to the United States (espionage), but to anyone who does not possess the required clearance and "need to know."

Disclosure of information gleaned from intelligence agencies poses a double threat to the security of the country. First, there is the compromise of intelligence information. As important though, it is possible that the unsanctioned release of this information will result in pinpointing the source of that information. If the source turns out to be an American with diplomatic immunity, he or she is expelled from the country in question. If the source turns out to be a national of the country, the agent's death is a likely result.

Maybe a reporter who receives and publishes such information is not guilty of a crime, but the person who saw fit (regardless of reason) to provide classified information to that reporter most certainly is guilty of violating the regulations and laws which govern his/her access to such sensitive data.

Let's not fall victim to the misapplied concepts of "freedom of the press" or First Amendment rights to provide such a poor excuse for the unlawful and intentional compromise of classified information.

Richard A. Bajackson.

Sparks.